

NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
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NSC BRIEFING

29 April 1959

THE NEW FRENCH SENATE

- I. French Senate elected 26 April has same political complexion as its Fourth Republic predecessor.
 - A. Electoral college voted for local notables; no political trend discernible.
 1. Of 255 senators elected in metropolitan France, 170 were members previous Senate, and 30 were assembly deputies defeated last November.
 - B. The Union for a New Republic (UNR) lost 2 of previous 29 Gaullist seats, mainly due UNR weak local organization.
 - C. Communist party lost 2 of previous 16 seats.
 1. Communist No. 2, Jacques Duclos, and wife of Secretary-General Thorez (Jeannette Vermeersch) elected.
- II. With more even balance between right and left than in assembly and with enhanced power under new Constitution, senate may act as a brake on rightist-dominated Assembly.
 - A. De Gaulle may be able to use senate to press policies unacceptable to his rightist assembly supporters, particularly on Algeria.
 - B. Debre government, however, weaker in senate where it is dependent on third member his coalition, the centrist Popular Republicans.
- III. 34 senators to be elected 31 May from Algeria will probably strengthen rightists, but other 18, representing overseas departments and territories and Frenchmen living abroad will probably be scattered among various parties.